1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

tribe, owned also the country on the opposite side of Apsley Strait at the southeast corner of Bathurst, while the Malauila, the band in the northern half of Bathurst Island, conversely overlapped their ownership across the strait to take in a thin strip of coastline on the northwest corner of Melville. 423 621

These details illustrate the fact that the band was the land-owning, workaday, territorially organized group which controlled the hunting, the food supply, and the warfare. Until the white man arrived in force in the coastal waters of North Australia, the average Tiwi regarded the nine bands as the main functional units of his existence, and his loyalty to and identification with his band were given much greater opportunity for exercise than any loyalty to or identification with the whole Tiwi tribe. He did many things as a member of a band, but he did little as a member of a tribe. Only when an outsider turned up did he need to think of himself as a Tiwi, and outsiders were very rare. For the rest of the time he thought of himself as a member of his band, thought of his band as his people, and of his band territory as his country. 619 621

The Household

Since the band consisted of anything from one hundred to three hundred people, it could not live together in one place, except for very short periods of time. Hunting and gathering in almost any part of the world (except the northwest coast of America in pre-white times) require the human population to disperse itself very thinly over the countryside and live from day to day in small hunting and camping units. Such small primary groups are usually in one sense families and in another sense households, and this is the case among the Tiwi. We propose to call such units households rather than families for reasons that will soon become apparent. It is true that Tiwi "houses," especially in the long dry season (from March to October), were the flimsiest and most temporary of structures, but the group of people in question was the group who lived together day after day, hunted as a unit, pooled the results of their food getting, and ate and slept together. Functionally this group is identical with an American household, even though the "house" they used was nothing more than a few piled-up tree branches, used as shelter for a night or two and then abandoned. Like the American household also, the Tiwi household usually consisted of a man, his wife (or wives), and their children, though in many would also be included a few leftovers or extras, common to all cultures, such as bachelor uncles, visiting cousins, ancient widowers, and ambiguous "men who came to dinner" and were still there. (Tiwi households did not, however, include maiden aunts, female orphans, or ancient widows, since these could not exist in Tiwi culture.) [361] 593 [342] [574] [589]

Thus the Tiwi household was more or less the same thing as the Tiwi family group, but Tiwi family organization had such a number of unusual twists that we find it desirable to insist upon calling such a group the house-

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

592 hold rather than the family. There was no ambiguity about its "living together" aspect; there were many ambiguities about its kinship aspects. To some of these unusual domestic usages we now turn.

Marriage by Betrothal

589 In many nonliterate societies, including most, if not all of the mainland Australian tribes, there is a tendency to believe that the main purpose in life for a female is to get married. The Tiwi subscribed to this idea, but firmly carried it to its logical conclusion; namely, that all females must get married, regardless of age, condition, or inclination. They (and they almost alone among human societies) took the very slight step from saying "All females *should* be married" to saying "All females *must* be married." As a result, in aboriginal times there was no concept of an unmarried female in Tiwi ideology, no word for such a condition in their language, and in fact, no female in the population without at least a nominal husband. Their own explanation of this unique situation was connected with their beliefs about conception and where 581 babies come from. Anthropologists have long been aware that the Australian 842 aborigines generally (and indeed some of the Melanesians, such as the famous case of the Trobriand Islands) ignored the role of the male in human conception and firmly believed that a woman becomes pregnant because a spirit has entered into her body. The Tiwi were no exception, but went a step further than the mainlanders in dealing with the dangerous situation created by the unpredictability of the spirits. Since any female was liable to be impregnated by a spirit at any time, the sensible step was to insist that every female have a husband *all the time* so that if she did become pregnant, the child would always have a father. As a result of this logical thinking, all [584] Tiwi babies were betrothed before or as soon as they were born; females were thus the "wives" of their betrothed husbands from the moment of birth onward. For similar reasons, widows were required to remarry at the gravesides [587] of their late husbands, and this rule applied even to ancient hags who had already buried half a dozen previous husbands in the course of a long life. It can readily be seen that these rules—prenatal betrothal of female infants and immediate remarriage of all widows—effectively eliminated all possibility of an unmarried female from Tiwi society. They also eliminated any possibility of an unmarried mother or a fatherless child. No matter where the unpredictable spirit chose to create a baby, whether it was in the body of a pretty young woman, a toothless old hag, or a little girl of six or seven, the pregnant [771 female would have a husband, and the children when born would have a 846] father. The Tiwi were thus probably the only society in the world with an illegitimacy rate of zero.

584 The practical application of these two unusual rules had certain unusual 851 consequences. The rule of prenatal betrothal obviously gave a great deal of power to the person with the right to betroth, and in Tiwi this right belonged 593

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

Tiwi household head is shown by the genealogies of the grandfathers of the present generation. Turimpi, who was born in the 1830's and died in the early 1900's, was at his death the most powerful old man among the Tiklauila. Some of his sons are still alive, and all of them were in the prime of life around 1930.[4] A complete list of Turimpi's wives, not all of them living in his household at the same time or necessarily alive at the same time, contains more than twenty names. But Turimpi was outshone in this regard by several of his contemporaries in other bands. A prominent Turupula of the same generation had a list of twenty-five; the father of Finger of the Wilrangwila had twenty-nine; the father of Tamboo and Puti had twenty-two. As late as 1930, men with lists of ten, eleven, and twelve wives were still plentiful, and Tu'untalumi, who was aged about seventy in that year and was a man of great influence, had by then accumulated no less than twenty-one.[5]

Such numbers of wives as these per husband are very much higher than usually prevail even among the most polygymous hunting tribes. Obviously, a domestic unit with twelve or more wives in it makes for a very large household. Among the Tiwi, a household even of such men as those just named did not contain all these wives at the same time, mainly because of the very great variation in the ages of a man's wives. As far as bestowed or betrothed wives were concerned, such wives arrived at their husband's household to take up wifely duties therein when they reached the age of about fourteen. Hence the first of them to arrive (typically when their husband was nearly forty) would be women of nearly forty by the time the latest of them arrived (typically when the husband was well into his sixties). Even when the husband died, let us say at the ripe old age of seventy-five, there would probably be some of his bestowed wives still under the age of fourteen who were as yet too young to join his household. Tu'untalumi, the man of twenty-one wives, was already about seventy in 1930, yet in his list of twenty-one wives five were still *al'inga*—that is, little girls not yet approaching puberty—and two were still babies at their mothers' breast. On the other hand, some of his earliest bestowed wives, who had taken up residence with him when he was in his late thirties, were already dead.

Because of this wide variation in the ages of a man's wives, it is necessary to distinguish between a "list" of a man's wives and those actually in residence in his household at any given time. The resident or active wives—one might almost say the working wives—were always fewer than the listed wives. This would necessarily be so even if marriage by betrothal were the only way by which a Tiwi man could obtain a wife. But while it was the most prestigeful form of marriage and the only respectable way in which a man could obtain a *young* wife, there were other ways of setting up a household

---

[4] See Hart 1954.

[5] Finger, Tamboo, and Puti were elders prominent in tribal affairs at the time of Hart's fieldwork. Puti was still alive in 1953-54 and well known to Pilling. Tu'untalumi, held in great affection by Hart, but anathema to the Mission Station, died in 1935.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

553 768 587 attaching some one semipermanent name to a person despite the rules of name taboo should not cause us to overlook the importance of these rules. In theory, at least, every new husband renamed all his wives' children by all their previous marriages—thus, at least symbolically, canceling out the signs of title of all the previous "fatherhoods" in those children and asserting his own fatherhood right as a new and exclusive one. A widow's new husband was the new household head for all her children, and he took over this position by renaming them all, thus becoming their legal father. If we can stop thinking of "father" as a biological or kin relationship, and think of the word as meaning only "head of the household," the Tiwi concept will become understandable. We will also realize that there is no contradiction or illogic involved in the Tiwi beliefs that male parents were not necessary for conception, but that every child born must be born to a woman with a husband. All they meant was that every child must be born into a household with a male at its head who belonged to a different clan from its mother—in other words, a "father," in Tiwi context.

584 592 768 The renaming of the children by the new household head was not, of course, sufficient to wipe out the commitments made by previous titleholders. Although the new father could and did change his step-daughters' names, he could not change their bestowals. The men upon whom the daughters had been bestowed by the previous father made sure of this. The new father was compelled to carry out the marriage arrangements for the daughters made by his predecessors in the fatherhood role, and there was sure to be a terrific row if he tried to alter them. Nevertheless, he acquired some power over the future of the daughters. The man to whom one of them had been promised by the previous father might die, thus making redisposal of the girl possible for him, or some new deal might be arrangeable in which he could use his new assets—for these new step-daughters were assets, regardless of the fact that their immediate matrimonial future was already settled. The new father could delay his decision as to whether they were yet old enough to join their betrothed husband or even drop a few hints that he did not think the betrothed husband's right to them was quite as certain as was generally believed. Such actions, of course, were liable to lead to violent reprisals by the betrothed husband, but there was always a chance that he would be open to a deal; for example, by giving an option on one of the women in whom he had an interest, he would seek to hasten the appearance of the girl in his own household or seek to clear whatever shadow upon his title to her the step-father sought to cast. Even the last husband of an elderly widow who had already passed through the hands of six or eight husbands and all of whose daughters were grown up and married two or three times already, gained some shadowy rights in the future remarriages of those daughters by marrying their ancient mother. And the validation of these shadowy rights was the fact that as their mother's new husband he had renamed the daughters and he who named them could bestow them. The only catch was, that while he could wipe out all the names bestowed by his predecessors, he could not equally readily wipe out their commitments. All he could do was maneuver within the network created by their

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

commitments so as to try and advantage himself as much as possible by a skillful use of whatever shadowy right in the daughters he had obtained by becoming their current "father." 584 592 768

It is within such a context that the apparent swapping of mothers by Dominico and Antonio must be viewed. By marrying Bongdadu in her dotage, Dominico had acquired some rights in the future remarriages of her daughters, the sisters of Antonio, but since his marriage to her had been, partly at least, arranged by Antonio and her other sons, he would have to share with them his disposal rights to their sisters. Similarly, the marriage of Dominico's ancient mother to Antonio (part, so to speak, of the same "package deal") meant that Antonio as current father had some say in the future disposal of Dominico's sisters when they became widowed, since he had the power of renaming them. 587 584

What in effect occurred in this, as in many other cases, was that men of different clans and of about the same age formed a partnership or close alliance wherein "sons" and "husbands" cooperated in arranging the remarriages of their "mothers" and "sisters" by acting as quasi-fathers and treating their mothers and sisters as "quasi-daughters." The partnership or "firm" of Dominico (of the Crane clan) and Antonio, Mariano, and their brothers (of the Red Paint clan) had already arranged the remarriages of Bongdadu (Red Paint clan) and of Dominico's mother (Crane clan), and stood ready to take care of all future remarriages of any of Bongdadu's daughters (Red Paint) or Dominico's sisters (Crane) whenever any of these women became widowed. Each member of the firm was trying to maximize his own self-interest in this and all the other alliances he had a share in, but operations had to be carried out in this partnership form because the marriage of any woman had to be arranged by her "father," and the father, in the Tiwi rules, had to be a nonclansman of the woman whose marriage he arranged. Hence the Red Paint men needed Dominico, a Crane, as a front man to arrange the remarriages of their sisters, and he in turn used Antonio, a Red Paint man, to arrange the remarriages of his sisters. When clansmen made decisions about the remarriages of their sisters, they could only do it by using agreeable nonclansmen as nominal "fathers" and cooperating with them—and the agreeable nonclansmen would of course only come in on the deal if there was something in it for them, as there was for the obscure and unimportant Dominico in the present case. In return for acting as a front for the Red Paint brothers, he got himself a second wife, an excellent food provider though no longer beautiful; he became the ally, even if junior, of some men with assured futures; and he acquired some shadowy residual rights in the future remarriages of several potential widows. Dominico did himself a lot of good by marrying Bongdadu; if he hadn't married her, he would never have attracted much tribal notice and hence would not have warranted mention in these pages. 571 584 587 614

We find that the whole complex situation makes most theoretical sense if we see it as essentially an institutional struggle between clan rights and the father's rights in women. Tiwi fathers, as suggested above, had taken away from the clan the right to make marriage decisions for newly born female members of the clan. As mechanisms validating this success of father's rights 584 592 614

As mechanisms validating this success of fathers rights

against clan rights there existed two rules: he who bestowed the name had the right to dispose in marriage; and all names given by a woman's previous husband were cancelled by his death and a new set of names given to all her children by her new husband. Strictly and universally enforced, such rules would put *all* control over the marriages of *all* women, of every age, in the hands of their mother's husbands—that is, men from outside the clan of the women being disposed of, in other words, fathers in the Tiwi sense. But the Tiwi system failed to achieve such a result though their rules are pointed toward it. They achieved something close to it as far as infant or even young girls were concerned, since the fellow clansmen of such girls were either (as brothers) too young and unimportant to have any power to resist this alien control over their sisters' hands, or (as mothers' brothers and hence older men) too involved and absorbed in their own activities *as fathers* to take any position asserting clan rights as against fathers' rights. To be successful in tribal life, an ambitious young Tiwi male was best advised to forget his mother and his sisters' daughters (all members of his clan) and concentrate on getting wives for himself. Only by getting wives could he have daughters, and only by having daughters could he build alliances and obtain influence, power, and more wives. To get wives for himself, he could not use his mother or his sisters or his sisters' daughters, since their disposal was in the hands of the men who had named them—that is, their fathers. But there came a time in the life of an older man when his mother was old, and *her* mother was dead, and therefore the rights of the last man to name his mother had lapsed. And a similar situation would arise in the case of his sisters when their mother's last husband died. By this age, a man so situated was likely to be powerful enough and skilled enough in the rules of the game to exert some control over the late remarriages of his elderly sisters and even of his mother, were she still alive. Whenever this occurred, although the resulting situation might have the superficial appearance of clan solidarity—with sons, mothers, brothers, and sisters all acting and planning together as a partnership—such a surface appearance was illusory. The motivations involved in it were scarcely altruistic desires on the part of the brothers to look after their mothers and elderly sisters, but rather efforts by the brothers to use to advantage, in their intricate political schemes, some women of their own clan (their mothers and elderly sisters). Earlier in life these men had been prevented from such manipulation by the control over those women exercised by nonclansmen (their husbands or fathers) through the naming rules. Put another way, we might say that Tiwi men as a group had acquiesced to the system wherein "the father" had control over all marriages of his "daughters," because every Tiwi man hoped to be a "father" himself; but having acquiesced, every Tiwi male tried to beat the system, especially as he became older and more influential, by intriguing in the remarriages of his mother and elderly sisters—matters in which, according to the strict letter of the law, he had no right to interfere, since bestowal rights resided with the "father" or "fathers" of these women. One factor which greatly contributed to the setting aside of the rights involved in the naming system was the fact that since, on the whole, old men married young women

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

and young men married old women, in many cases the nominal "father" of an elderly woman was very much younger and less influential than were her brothers, or her sons by an earlier husband. The brothers and/or sons, therefore, were able to override the wishes of their sisters' nominal father since the seniority system was on their side in such contests, even though the renaming rules were not.

Although it was very rare indeed for any Tiwi male to have a resident young wife until he was nearly forty, long before that age he was likely to acquire an ancient widow or two. In at least ninety out of every hundred cases a man's first resident wife was a widow very much older than himself. According to a complete genealogical census carried out in 1928-29, nearly every man in the tribe in the age group from thirty-two to thirty-seven was married to an elderly widow. Many of them had two elderly widows and a few had three. But very few of them, and certainly not more than one out of five of them, had a resident *young* wife. About half of them had bestowed wives, but these were mostly toddling infants who would not come into residence with them for another ten years or more. Even for the most promising and rapidly rising young man, the first young bestowed wife was not likely to arrive until several years after his marriage to a widow.

To get a start in life as a household head and thus to get his foot on the first rung of the prestige ladder, a Tiwi man in his thirties had first of all to get himself married to an elderly widow, preferably one with married daughters. This was the beginning of his career as a responsible adult. The widow did several things for him. She became his food provider and housekeeper. She served as a link to ally him with her sons. As her husband, he acquired some rights in the future remarriages of her daughters when they became widowed. And she, as the first resident wife in his household, stood ready to be the teacher, trainer, and guardian of his young bestowed wives when they began to join him after they reached puberty.

Levirate, Sororate, and Cross-Cousin Marriage

We have emphasized infant bestowal and widow remarriage because it was the elaborate development of these two matrimonial mechanisms that brought about the unusual, perhaps unique, character of the Tiwi household. Other matrimonial mechanisms, more usual in preliterate societies, were also used by the Tiwi but always in combination with or as minor adjuncts to the two basic mechanisms. Thus, a man often remarried his dead brother's wives, or at least some of them, within the institution of widow remarriage. Such a practice is known to anthropologists as the levirate, and tribes are said "to *have*" *the levirate or "not to have" it. The Tiwi, with their pluralistic approach* to the whole area of marriage relationships, can hardly be said to fall into either category. To them, every widow had to remarry and among the many possible candidates for her, the brothers of the dead husband were recognized as having a reasonable, but far from automatic, claim. Whether the brothers

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

to at least reside in some household and had at least a nominal current husband at any given moment of time, all we need to note about them at this point is that in any listing of a man's wives we have to include "disputed" wives in addition to all the other categories of wives mentioned previously.

The Household: An Overview

In the discussion so far we have selected only those aspects of the Tiwi family complex that had close bearing on the nature of the household. These aspects can be briefly summarized as follows:

1. the high number of wives per husband that a successful man was likely to acquire if he lived long enough.

2. the two distinct mechanisms by which wives were acquired—infant bestowal and widow remarriage.

3. the operation of the bestowal system in such a way as to prevent even the most promising young man from achieving coresidence with a bestowed wife until he was at least nearly forty years old.

4. the tendency for success to lead to more success, whereby *some* astute men received into their households a number of young wives in rapid succession after the age of forty.

5. the tendency of younger men and of nonbetrothed younger men in particular to marry elderly widows while waiting for betrothed wives to grow up or, in the case of those with no bestowals in sight, to enable them to start a household of their own.

6. as a result of the integrated operation of all these customs, the strong tendency in Tiwi households for husbands to be very much older than their wives (as a result of infant bestowal) or very much younger than their wives (as a result of widow remarriage) or—what was commonest of all in the bigger households—some combination of both. Hence many a Tiwi husband had some wives much older than himself, including some already dead (but still counted), and some very much younger than himself, including some who were still babies in their mothers' wombs (with their sex still undetermined). All these dead wives, current wives, nominal wives, "disputed" wives, not-yet-joined-the-household wives, and not-yet-born wives were still counted in a husband's list, and the length of his list was a measure of his influence, power, and importance as a household head.

It is now perhaps clear why we chose to begin our account of Tiwi culture with some discussion of Tiwi marriage. Compulsory marriage for all females, carried out through the twin mechanisms of infant bestowal and widow remarriage, resulted in a very unusual type of household, in which old successful men had twenty wives each, while men under thirty had no wives at all and men under forty were married mostly to elderly crones. This unusual household structure was the focal point of Tiwi culture. It linked together in an explicable unity the kinship system, the food-gathering system, the political

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

182 592 and prestige system, the totemic system, the seniority system, the sexual system, and the legal-moral-religious system of the tribe. Or perhaps all these should be labeled as subsystems under the household structure, the master system which unified them. We turn therefore to consider the Tiwi household as it affected the food-gathering and leisure-time activities of the people.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

621 The fluidity of band affiliation was so constant a feature of Tiwi life that almost the only firm generalization that can be made about it is that when "a big man" with a large household had lived most of his adult life in the territory of a band, and had been up to the time of his death one of the dominating elders of that band, his children, both male and female, would be regarded as "really" members of that band during *their* lifetimes, regardless of where marriage took the girls, or where their own life careers or the remarriages of their mothers took the boys. Thus in 1928 the three oldest men of Malau—Ki-in-kumi, Enquirio, and Merapanui—were regarded as core members of the Malauila band. Reference to their family trees reveals that the latter two had been born in Malau to a big man of that band in the previous generation and had resided in Malau all their lives. Ki-in-kumi, however, always thought of as equally a Malauila, in fact had been born in Rangu to a Rangwila father and had moved to Malau as a youth when his marriage prospects had seemed to him best in that district. This move had happened so long ago that only old people remembered it, and as a result all three old men were generally regarded as "real" Malauila and the children of all three would so be regarded all their lives. Such identification would hardly carry over for more than one, or at best, two generations. In explaining the matter, we have had to use the English word "really" in quotation marks because the Tiwi themselves had no corresponding concept. If one asked "Why is he a Malauila when he never seems to live there?" the answer would be "Because his father was, and he grew up there." It was only in pidgin English that one could talk of a "real Malauila" or a "real Rangwila." In Tiwi language and thought, Malau or Rangu was a firm, fixed, unchanging piece of country; the Malauila or Rangwila were the households, of constantly changing personnel, who hunted there, and a man had to belong to one of those households practically all his life and have his father before him also a permanent resident of the same district before his identification with that district was sufficiently close to approximate the degree of identification that is implied in the European concept of a "real" Malauila or "really" a Rangwila.

592 [621] The crux, then, of Tiwi territorial organization was not the band but the household.[1] A band was merely the temporary concentration in one district of semiautonomous households which were the food-collecting, living-together, and sleeping-together units of Tiwi life. People were not members

[1] There has been a prolonged argument in the anthropological journals about the Australian territorial unit, especially as to whether it was patrilineal or matrilineal. For the Tiwi, such a problem could not arise. A father bestowed his daughters where he wished and at puberty they joined their husbands. Where his sons found wives was no concern of the father, and hence where they established their households was of no interest to him either. The father would wish, however, that they would establish their households as far away from his as possible since then he would not have to worry about them interfering with his young wives. On the other hand, it was thought to be "unfatherly" actually to throw sons out. See G. P. Murdock and A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and A. P. Elkin in *American Anthropologist* (*passim*) for the main contributions to the mainland argument, which we think becomes pointless when dominance of the household tie over band ties existed, as it did among the Tiwi.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

of bands as part of any political or legal system; they were members of households as part of a domestic system. What held the unit together was the central position and dominance of the father or husband, and hence the life of a household was only as long as his lifetime. When he died, the household broke up and the surviving members joined other households, perhaps in the same district, perhaps in some other band territory. Such change of household was carried out by the individuals concerned, not quite at will, but certainly not with sufficient uniformity for any political or legal label to be put upon it.

Uniformity was derived from the fact that every Tiwi had to live in a household. The universal prohibition on unmarried females was obviously one expression of that requirement. For men, the requirement was less firm, and if a young man wanted to live entirely alone he was free to try—although there is no record of any man having tried it for more than a few weeks at a time. Even if his mother were dead and his father or step-father did not welcome him, he attached himself to some household since, apart from any question of loneliness, this was the only way by which he could eat regularly. For Tiwi households were primarily autonomous food-producing and food-consumption units. A household made its own decisions, camped where it saw fit to camp, moved on when the food quest made it advantageous or necessary to move on. A large household, such as that of Ki-in-kumi or any other big man, was a complete community in itself, with the old man as executive director. He laid down the daily, weekly, and monthly work and travel schedules for the women, the young men, and the children. Most of the time the work went automatically because all the adults and the older children knew their jobs.

Daily Activities

By shortly after dawn each day, the household was up, and after a light breakfast, usually of leftovers from the previous night, everybody left camp to go to work. The women and children (except perhaps the five- to ten-year-old boys, who were rather useless at that age) scattered in every direction from the camp with baskets and/or babies on their backs, to spend the day gathering food, chiefly vegetable foods, grubs, worms, and anything else edible. Since they had spent their lives doing it, the old women knew all about gathering and preparing vegetable foods, and they supervised the younger women. This was one important reason for men marrying widows, and even a man with many young wives was quite likely to remarry an elderly widow or two nonetheless. A husband with only young wives might have a satisfactory sex life, but he still needed a household manager if he wished to eat well. The supervision of the female members of the household was left to the old women and, provided the returns were good, the husband did not attempt to interfere nor to give orders concerning the details of women's work.

After the women had scattered out in a wide circuit from the camp, the husband might hunt, but only if he were not too old. In hunting kanga-

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

roos,[8] wildfowl, and other game, keen eyesight is essential, hence Tiwi men did very little hunting once they were past about forty-five, though they hated to admit their hunting days were over. The meat, fish, and game provided for the large household of an old man was obtained by the young men, and this was about the only thing an old man thought his sons or his step-sons were good for. Typically the young man, when he returned at nightfall with a kangaroo which he had spent most of the day tracking down and spearing, would ignore the old man and dump the carcass at the feet of his mother as if to say, "I brought this back for you, not for that old So and So."

As the women straggled back to camp toward sundown with the results of their day's gathering and the young hunters brought in their bags, cooking began and the main meal of the day (usually the only hot meal) was eaten. The Tiwi themselves had no doubt about the close relationship between plural marriage and good eating. "If I had only one or two wives I would starve," the head of a large household once told the missionary who was preaching against plural marriage, "but with my present ten or twelve wives I can send them out in all directions in the morning and at least two or three of them are likely to bring something back with them at the end of the day, and then we can all eat." This was a realistic appraisal of the economic situation and it is to be noted that he put the emphasis on the food obtained by the women gatherers rather than that supplied by the male hunters. Based on the observations of 1928-29, it would appear that the Tiwi ate pretty well, especially in the larger households. Kangaroo and other marsupials, and some of the larger lizards (for example, the goanna) were very plentiful in the bush, as were fish and turtles and dugong on the coasts and wild geese in many districts. But all these were extras or dividends; the staple everyday foods were the vegetable foods gathered day after day in apparently unending quantities by the women. For most months of the year there was always plenty of *kwoka*, a porridgelike dish prepared by soaking and mashing the small nuts of a native palm. These nuts grew in such quantity that in every large camp baskets or dishes of *kwoka*, at various stages of preparation, were always available, even for midnight snacks if anybody woke up hungry. *Kwoka* was about as dull and tasteless as Scotch porridge, but equally filling, and naked small boys full of *kwoka* had stomachs distended like balloons. In the wet season the place of *kwoka* was taken by *kolema*, a yam whose ripening and growing season was much shorter than that of the nuts from which *kwoka* was made. It was on the abundance of the *kolema* yams during January and February that the Tiwi supported the more elaborate of their collective ceremonials.

The abundance of these and other vegetable foods, plus the ample supply of game and fish in many places, meant that under aboriginal conditions the Tiwi lived at a food-consumption level much further above the near-

[8] Actually there are no kangaroos on Melville and Bathurst Islands; the chief meat animal is a slightly smaller species of marsupial technically called the wallaby. As the distinction is important only to zoologists, and as many of the so-called kangaroos in American zoos are in fact wallabies, we prefer to use the more familiar word.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

starvation level than was the case with many of the mainland tribes.[8] Even to talk about the Tiwi in near-starvation terms seems quite incongruous, for there was an abundance of native food available the whole year around and their only problem was to collect or catch it. We regard the development of their large multiple-wife household as essentially their own evolutionary solution to the problem of finding the most efficient unit of food production. Abundant food was there in the bush in its raw state; the most efficient way to extract it was by a work unit represented by such households as those of Ki-in-kumi, or Tu'untalumi, with the old remarried widows directing the young women and the hunting and fish spearing being done by the younger males.

Even the smallest households nearly always contained at least one old female veteran of the food quest who knew the bush like the palm of her hand and could wrestle some food out of the most inhospitable district. The only households that ever went hungry—and they only overnight or at worst for twenty-four hours or so—were the small households of only one or two wives, especially if both wives were young and inexperienced or young and flighty or both. Such households were uneconomic and were rare. On the other hand, the apparently absurd households such as those in which two young men shared their respective elderly mothers as wives, made good economic sense. Any attempt by two such young men to substitute two young wives or even four young wives for the two old ladies would have drastically reduced the standard of living of the household. When young wives arrived in Tiwi households they were not regarded as replacements for the old crones but joined as reinforcements and apprentices to the skilled workers—the veterans. The sexual aspects of marriage were necessarily subordinated to the housekeeping or food-production aspects, which is why in the previous section we spoke of every young man laying the foundation of his household by marrying an elderly widow usually long before there was any young wife in sight.

Since the bigger the household the more food it produced for its own consumption, there was a tendency for the smaller and therefore hungrier households to hang around the fringes of the bigger ones. Though every household was autonomous and could camp and collect food anywhere in the band territory in which it roamed, it was rare to find all the households in a band distributed evenly over the available territory. In Malau, Enquirio's household and that of Merapanui were usually to be found camped together, since the two men were full brothers and not in competition with each other. Also camped with or near them on any given occasion would be a few other small households. Such a combined group as this would, all told, amount to between forty and fifty people camping at the same spot and remaining together for weeks at a time. Under mainland conditions in most areas, a gathering of forty people for ten days at a time in the same locality was unheard of, except on

[8] As was pointed out earlier, the best-watered and most fertile areas of the mainland were the areas attractive to white settlement, and the tribes who inhabited such areas (for example, Victoria or coastal Queensland) were wiped out quickly. Most of the mainland tribes who survived long enough to be studied by modern anthropologists were tribes whose habitats were unfavorable both for native and for white occupation.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

special rare ceremonial occasions, because of the poverty of the food supply. The prevalence of such large camps among the Tiwi supports our general thesis that their native food supply was, for Australia, unusually plentiful, and that, in this sense, the Tiwi were a "rich" Australian tribe.

When camped together thus, the various households kept their distance, with the main fires and shelters of each separated by some twenty or thirty yards from the others, and during the day when everybody (except the old men) was out food collecting, the camps were almost deserted. When the food gatherers returned in twos and threes in the late afternoon, each household would cook and eat at its own fires as a unit, but if they wished, members of the smaller households, in which food returns for the day were probably smaller per capita than those of the bigger households, would "drop in during supper" upon the latter and supplement their own slender meal. Such hospitality was always extended on an individual basis; some member of the bigger household, usually a senior wife, would offer to one of the visitors a piece of meat or a dish of *kwoka* and if rebuked by her husband she would justify her act by mentioning her own kin relationship to the visitor, as if to stress that the kindness was her own individual gesture and did not commit the whole household to friendliness. Heads of large households were, however, generally very permissive if such handouts were made by senior females of their household to women or children of other households; it was handouts to adult male outsiders, especially young male outsiders, that were likely to provoke snarls or reprimands from the old man. This was in line with the general hostility of all old men to all young unmarried men that ran through all aspects of Tiwi culture.

After darkness fell, such a camp, with three or four households all resting within easy hearing distance of each other, became highly animated with men visiting from fire to fire as the women, who were not encouraged to walk about after dark, gossiped around their own fires. Little productive work could be done after dark, though a few cooking chores and food-preparation activities were performed, and most people went to sleep early unless the shouted conversations from fire to fire earlier in the evening had started an argument. If an argument did arise, the participants might go on abusing each other at long range for hours, with many of the listeners becoming involved and the rest remaining awake to enjoy the row.

Such rows were almost invariably outgrowths of the constant suspicion with which older men regarded younger men. This suspicion was in turn part of the price the Tiwi had to pay for the efficient type of food-production unit that they had evolved. This production unit, to reach maximum economic efficiency, required the vast majority of all females to be concentrated in the households of a very small number of husbands; namely, the very oldest men. As a necessary correlate, men under twenty-eight had no wives at all and very few men under forty had any wife except elderly and physically very unattractive widows. The efficient economic organization thus obviously created a moral and social problem—the problem of how to keep the unmarried young men away from the young women. The old head of the household had a double role:

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

he was at the same time the executive director of a work unit which he expected to work for him, and the husband of many of its members whom he expected to be faithful to him. The young wives were willing, under supervision, to meet his first expectation, but found it difficult, even under the strictest supervision, to meet the second. Successful supervision of the morals of young wives was easy to achieve at night because each camp was then gathered together and it was relatively easy for the husband and his senior wives to guard the young wives closely. But during the daytime matters were different. Then the young women of the household were widely scattered through the fairly dense bush and it was impossible for the old wives to watch them every minute of the day. And the young men of other households, or even of their own household, were hunting game in the same neighborhood. Encounters, whether by chance or by previous arrangement, were likely to occur and probably occurred with a high degree of frequency. We say "probably" because no anthropologist working with a tribe which has neither courts nor written records can ever know how often casual extramarital offenses take place. (There is even some difficulty in obtaining reliable statistics on such matters in our own society, as the attacks on the late Dr. Kinsey's statistics indicate.) We therefore make no statement about how common the act of adultery was in Tiwi culture, but we can say that, judging by the public accusations of adultery, its practice must have been widespread indeed. In any Tiwi camp comprising more than two households, few weeks went by without an outraged and angry old husband shouting accusations at one of the younger men sitting by another camp fire a few yards away. The young man accused would (usually) deny it; the old women of both households would enter the argument, the young man's mother protesting his innocence, the old man's elderly wives (who had of course been the informers) giving details of time and place and circumstance; the young man would produce, or try to produce, an alibi and appeal to a friend to bear him out; the old man would call the friend a liar and the youth's mother an old witch; the youth's mother would retaliate by shouting things she knew (but had never before revealed) about the private lives of everybody in the old man's household, including the old man himself when he was a young bachelor. A good time would be had by all, including the listening anthropologist, but nobody would get much sleep. Such nocturnal uproars, always starting with accusations hurled by an older husband against a younger man and always involving incidents that had allegedly occurred while the young wife was somehow left unchaperoned for a short period during her daytime wandering in search of food, were a commonplace of nightlife among the Tiwi; but no case was ever reported, observed, or hinted at in which even the most adventurous and enterprising bachelor had succeeded in seducing, or had even attempted to seduce, a young wife when she was back in camp after nightfall. The deeds were always done in the secrecy of the bush during the daytime; it was the recriminations and accusations that occurred in the public glare of the campfires at nighttime.

Sometimes these disputes or accusations went no further than the nocturnal shouting of charges. Often the young man accused the previous night

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

The matter of men traveling to distant camps for ceremonials illuminates again, and from a new angle, the great value of elderly widows in the household. Tu'untalumi, during his visit to Malau in August, was able to split his household efficiently by taking a couple of old wives with him to supervise his young wives on the journey and leaving other old wives at home in Tangio to begin storing up food for the grass-burning project which he intended to stage on his return. It will be noticed in the account of his movements that he began issuing invitations to the grass burning on his way home from Malau, showing his confidence that the elderly wives he had left at home would have the preparations well in hand during his absence. A big man with a big household really needed three or four elderly widows because these enabled him to split his work force in various ways as his various political and social obligations required and to be sure of trustworthy supervision of each of the segments. A man without widows in his household, or with only one, could not do this; in fact, it was hard for a man without widows to attend ceremonials at all, or even to receive a large party of visitors to his household. And, as we have already pointed out, since such a man would probably go hungry very often because he would not dare to send his unsupervised young wives into the bush to gather food, there were practically no such men nor such households. Widows were indispensable to a senior Tiwi, both in his public and in his private life.

Making Things

Throughout this chapter we have been stressing the contrast between the dull routine of life in an isolated Tiwi household during the greater part of the year and the sort of life typical on those relatively rare occasions when something special—a festival, a funeral, a fight, a grass burning, a naming ceremony, some collective phase of men's initiation—required the assembling together of several households for joint activity. Before leaving the daily life of the isolated camp, we should mention one other area of activity—namely, the manufacturing activities of the tribe. The Tiwi did not manufacture much, but spears, throwing sticks, canoes, digging sticks, baskets, bodily ornaments, graveposts, and all the miscellaneous paraphernalia used in ceremonials had to be made in whatever leisure time people could find during the long weeks and months when each of the households lived more or less in isolation from the others. Crude and simple as these artifacts were, their construction required time, and only the older men had the time and the skill based on experience to make the more important of them.

Largely because of their failing eyesight, the older men hunted very little and hence tended to remain in camp all day while the young men were hunting and the women were gathering. There were, of course, some old men who took advantage of this time to do little except doze in the shade, but most of the household heads spent a fairly active day in camp engaged in making things. Here we find another aspect of Tiwi culture that results from

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

182
511
531
517
887
592
[431]
517
887

the relatively favorable food supply. Some of the Tiwi artifacts, particularly the highly decorative graveposts and ceremonial spears, are unique among Australian tribes, and the carving and painting of these graveposts and spears were skills possessed only by the senior men. They were provided with the leisure time necessary to develop and use these skills by the efficiency in food production of the large household which all old men were expected to accumulate with age, and which many old men did succeed in accumulating. We said earlier that the bigger the household, the better its members ate. We now add the further correlation that the bigger the household, the more leisure time was provided for its head to engage in manufacturing and artistic production. Tu'untalumi has been cited as an example of a large household head (twelve resident wives and thirteen children at home in 1928-29) who loved ceremonial affairs. It would be wrong to infer from this that Tu'untalumi only loved going to parties. He also loved preparing for them, and this preparation (for him as for all other senior men) included the manufacture of ceremonial spears, the preparation of graveposts, and the composition of songs and dances. In the long dull periods between trips outside his home district, he spent most of the days and many of the nights in the creation of these ceremonial necessities. He was not a full-time specialist in the sense that he made spears or posts to exchange with other men who had neither the time nor the skill—the rules of kinship required that every senior man make his own ceremonial spears and contract for his own posts. Tu'untalumi manufactured his graveposts to meet his own ritual obligations, but he took a more magnanimous view of those obligations than did most men. Put in our terms, we might say that he was wealthy enough (in the size of his household) to be generous with his own productions. One example of this attitude was his attendance at funerals that other men of equal kinship to the deceased did not find it necessary to attend; his frequent contribution of an extra gravepost to those provided by the chief mourners of the deceased was a similar gesture. "Tu'untalumi not only came to our mother's funeral, he also made a gravepost for it" was a very gratifying reflection for an obscure group of mourners to cherish among their memories, and of course it was acts of this sort that made the old man so well liked and admired. The economic point of the matter, however, is that only a man with as large a household as his could afford the gesture of giving away, in a situation where kinship obligations did not demand it, a gravepost that required about a week's full-time work.

It was, however, sad to observe that as an artistic producer Tu'untalumi, like many intellectuals in other cultures, tended to operate in too many media. His work as a composer of songs and dances was universally admired, but his graveposts, while appreciated, were not regarded as being as outstanding, technically speaking, as those of another old man, his crony Timalarua. In personality, Timalarua, a successful household head (eleven living wives, ten children at home), was quiet spoken, placid, and only mildly gregarious, and he is mainly of interest because in his leisure-time activity he paid but routine attention to song and dance compositions and concentrated rather single mindedly on making canoes, ceremonial spears, and graveposts. Fre-

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

in the manipulation of the remarriages of elderly widows, who were always in large supply. If a man showed skill and know-how in his early thirties among the widows, then in his late thirties and early forties young wives would be bestowed upon him in abundance. Such a lesson could not have a better exemplar than Gitjara. By age 33 he had done so well among the widows that his first *young* wife would be joining his household by the time he was thirty-eight or thirty-nine, and another was already a year old. Clearly he was a young man of promise and one to be watched—and cultivated.

Summit, a man slightly older than Gitjara, must be dealt with very briefly, since the reasons for his success would take us too far afield. In 1929 he had a list of six wives, the only resident one being an elderly widow. The other five were bestowals and the eldest of these was the girl of ten whom we have already mentioned as being in the household of her step-father, Gitjara. Two more, younger than the ten-year-old, were in the household of Padimo (see below) and the remaining two were in the household of one of the elders of the Rangwila band. Summit, in Tiwi reckoning, was a Rangwila himself and had only moved to Malau a few years before. Some four years previously he had been a young Rangwila with no less than five bestowed child-wives. Three of these had been given him by an elder in Malau, two by an elder of his own band. The Malauila girls were older than the two Rangwila girls and his Malauila father-in-law was older than his Rangwila father-in-law. Summit therefore moved north to supervise personally his interests in Malau. He had, however, been out-maneuvered when the Malauila father-in-law died, since Gitjara had then been able to remarry the mother of Summit's eldest child-wife and Padimo had been able to remarry the mother of the other two little girls. Having thus moved to Malau to be near to and a satellite of his elderly Malauila father-in-law, Summit now found himself the technical son-in-law of two young men of his own age group who were among his keen competitors in the influence struggle. To ensure that his three promised Malauila child-wives joined his household when old enough, he now needed to make some arrangements with Gitjara and Padimo. Summit had gotten his bestowals rather early and rather easily but he still had the problem of nailing them down.

While thus engaged in acquiring five bestowed young wives and trying to promote their safe delivery when ready, Summit had married a widow not much more than forty years old but childless by her two previous husbands.[8] Such a widow at least provided him with a food-getter and housekeeper and enabled him to establish a household into which his five bestowed wives would enter as they successively reached the proper age. Thus Summit's household in 1929 consisted only of himself and his *palimaringa* wife. Within the next fifteen years it would be increased by the addition of at least five young wives,

[8] Such women who had reached middle age without surviving children were called by a special term, *palimaringa*, in Tiwi and the term referred to childlessness rather than barrenness. Summit's widow, for example, had borne two children, both of whom had died in infancy, and she was classified as a *palimaringa*. When a *palimaringa* became very, very old indeed, the word changed to *timaringa*.

I: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

plus any new bestowals, plus any further widows Summit might find it to his interest (and power) to remarry.

Padimo, who thus enters our story as one of Summit's rivals and one of his nominal fathers-in-law, was also a Rangwila who had moved to Malau at the call of an elderly father-in-law. He presents another pattern of Tiwi upward mobility and one that was statistically more frequent than the rather tortuous road followed by men like Gitjara. Padimo had been chosen as a nephew worth supporting by old Ki-in-kumi, the wealthiest of the Malauila. The earliest proof of Ki-in-kumi's patronage of Padimo had come in 1925-26 when an old man died, leaving eight widows of very diverse ages. Three of these "widows," aged respectively 17, 13, and 9 at the time of the death of their first husband, were daughters of Ki-in-kumi. Being so young and their brothers being equally young, their father's right to arrange their remarriage was unchallenged and Ki-in-kumi reassigned[4] them as wives to young Padimo, then aged about thirty-three. The eldest of the three girls had already borne two female children to the dead man, these being the two girl babies mentioned above as having been promised to Summit.

As well as the three young widows, Padimo had also obtained at the same redistribution the oldest and most haggish of the dead man's eight wives. It was at the same redistribution that Gitjara had obtained his second widow (the mother of the girl promised to Summit). Thus through Ki-in-kumi's influence, Padimo had obtained four "widows" of the eight left by the man who died in 1925-26; Gitjara, working without a powerful patron, had been lucky to obtain one.

Ki-in-kumi had subsequently followed up this initial selection of Padimo as a favored sister's son by giving further daughters to him as they were born. Consequently, by 1929 Padimo's wife list consisted of the following:

A. One extremely ancient widow.

B. One wife aged about 20, daughter of Ki-in-kumi, mother already of two daughters by a previous husband who, before his death, bestowed these daughters on Summit.

C. One wife aged about 17, daughter of Ki-in-kumi; had just had her first child (who lived only a week); had previously been bestowed on the dead husband of wife B, but was too young to join his household before he died.

D. Three more girls, daughters of Ki-in-kumi, the eldest about 12 and hence old enough to have been bestowed on the same previous husband as wives B and C; the other two aged 2 and 1 and hence born since his death. All three of these were still resident in their father's household.

[4] It is difficult to decide whether such reassignments of female children by their father, on the death of the man to whom he had first betrothed them, should be called "rebestowals" or "remarriages." We prefer the first word since such "child-widows" were usually reassigned by their fathers (if still alive) without any challenge to his rights to do so. They therefore do not differ from original bestowals at birth except for the awkward semantic fact that the man to whom such a "child-wife" was reassigned was technically her second husband.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

With a lineup such as this by the time he was thirty-six, Padimo was clearly in process of going places in Tiwi society. The only weakness one could see in his position was that it all derived from the favor of one patron, and no old man with daughters, other than Ki-in-kumi, had seen fit to bestow a girl upon him. It should be noted that in 1929, though Padimo had two young wives resident in his household, he still had no children of his own. His first child, born that year, lived only a few days. The only children in residence were the two girls promised to Summit by the previous husband of their mother. Their bestowal on Summit was a matter beyond Padimo's control though he could use them to force some concessions from Summit just as Gitjara could with the girl in his household. But as Padimo's young wives began to bear daughters of his own, his bestowal of them would be less encumbered by the commitments of any predecessor. While Ki-in-kumi lived, Padimo would have to consider his obligations to that old man and at least consult with Ki-in-kumi as to how he should bestow his female children, since any such children would be the daughters' daughters of the old man. Nor would the death of Ki-in-kumi leave Padimo entirely free to bestow his own daughters anywhere he wished. Many of the girls already given to him as wives by Ki-in-kumi had mothers who possibly, and brothers who certainly, would outlive Ki-in-kumi. On the old man's death, all of his numerous wives would remarry—some of the older ones probably to ambitious younger men—and these new husbands of the widows of Ki-in-kumi would begin interfering with and trying to alter the arrangements made for his daughters by the old man during his lifetime. Thus Padimo would find himself stuck with a group of new and antagonistic fathers-in-law in place of the old, indulgent father-in-law who had been responsible for his success so far. Padimo's problem was basically how to hold, after Ki-in-kumi's death, the favored position he had gained during the old man's lifetime through the old man's favor.

In the meantime, with Ki-in-kumi still alive and powerful, Padimo had the biggest and fastest expanding household among the Malauila men in their thirties. The only remaining man in this age group was Boya who was the oldest of them all, being at least 42 years old in 1928. As might be expected, his career illustrates some new facets of the Tiwi influence struggle.

Structurally the position of Boya was simple but politically it was complex. His father had been a henchman and satellite of Ki-in-kumi in the early career of that old operator and roughly had had somewhat the same relationship to the young Ki-in-kumi as L. F. B. had to Gitjara. Boya's father, the satellite, left only two widows (an indication of his mediocrity) and these two widows had been remarried by Ki-in-kumi, the patron. One of these widows was Boya's mother, and Boya was too young at the time to have any say in where his mother remarried. Ki-in-kumi's interest in marrying Boya's mother was not of course because he thus acquired Boya as a step-son, but because he acquired Boya's sisters as step-daughters. Step-sons were liabilities which new husbands had to take over in order to get rights in the real assets —the step-daughters.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

Some years later, when Boya had reached a reasonable age like 30, Ki-in-kumi had arranged for him to marry a very ancient and childless widow (*palimaringa*) more than twenty years older than himself. This was all that Ki-in-kumi considered he needed to do for his step-son, and in Tiwi terms it was almost a gesture of contempt and an open indication that Ki-in-kumi, by providing him with an old woman who was childless but could cook, was not interested in helping Boya toward a career. Since the joining up of Boya to the crone took place shortly after the death of Boya's mother, who had lived with her sons in Ki-in-kumi's household, Ki-in-kumi by producing the old widow for Boya was telling him in effect to get out and start his own household now that his mother was dead.

In 1928 we found Boya aged about 42 married to the crone of 65. But he, she, and Boya's younger brother of 24 were still living in Ki-in-kumi's household. Ki-in-kumi's detestation of him was notorious and yet Boya had by now no less than four young bestowed child-wives growing up elsewhere. No one of these bestowals had come from Malau but were bestowals from different fathers of baby girls in other bands. At first sight this presented a curious situation. Within his own band Boya appeared a complete failure, suffering so severely from Ki-in-kumi's hostility that he had received no bestowals and at age 42 did not even have a separate household of his own. But how could this judgement be squared with the four bestowals from elders of other bands? Clearly none of the causes of success so far analyzed fitted the case of Boya.

Further research into who lived with whom as distinct from who was married to whom revealed that not only was "the household" of Boya, his elderly wife, and his younger brother an integral part of the Ki-in-kumi "establishment," but also that Padimo with his "household" was part of that establishment. Padimo, like Boya, had one elderly wife but he also had five bestowed wives, all daughters of Ki-in-kumi. We said above that the two eldest of these five girls being now aged 20 and 17 respectively were in residence with their husband, while the three youngest, not having reached puberty, were still "with their father." Actual observation showed that this was an academic distinction, since the households of Padimo, the son-in-law, and Ki-in-kumi, the father-in-law, were parts of the same establishment. When one of Ki-in-kumi's daughters bestowed on Padimo became old enough to "leave her father and join her husband," she did not have to move her residence or even change her daily work routines. She merely sat at night around the campfire of her older sisters (Padimo's wives) instead of around the campfire of her younger sisters (Ki-in-kumi's daughters). She remained part of the same establishment.

Padimo, it will be remembered, was the young man whom Ki-in-kumi had attracted from Rangu to Malau by liberally bestowing him with child-wives. Padimo had thus moved into the northern band and by 1928 had moved right into Ki-in-kumi's camp, where he functioned as a sort of executive officer and heir apparent to the old man. In the same camp, though in a very different capacity, was Boya, the 42-year-old despised step-son. Many roads thus led to Ki-in-kumi's household, but before discussing the large establishment

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
O120 Tiwi O120

of that wealthy elder, we will first summarize, in Table I, the marital conditions of the eight young men we have been discussing.

TABLE I
THE MALAUILA YOUNG MEN IN 1928-29

Name	Age	Resident Old Wives (Ex-widows)	Resident Young Wives (Bestowals)	Promised Wives (Under 14)	Own Children
Tiberun	53	0	0	0	0
Banana	28	1	0	0	0
Teapot	35	0[a]	0	0	1
Gitjara	35	2	0	2	1
L. F. B.	38	1	0	1	0
Summit	36	1	0	5	0
Padimo	36	1	2	3	0[b]
Boya	42	1	0	4	0

[a] Teapot's "stolen" wife was dead.
[b] Padimo's first child, born in 1929, lived only a few days.

This table presents a summary of many of our earlier attempts at generalization. The only Malauila under the age of 43 who had a bestowed young wife old enough to live with him was Padimo, who was thus exceptionally lucky. Leaving out young Banana, five of the seven men between the ages of 30 and 42 had young females promised to them, but these were mostly babies or children who would not come into residence for several years. Six of the seven had married widows, mostly elderly widows, well in advance of the arrival of young wives and before any father had bestowed a daughter on them. Finally, and a point not made before, men of this age group rarely had any children of their own. The only entries in the last column of Table I are the irregularly born son of Teapot; Padimo's first daughter who died virtually at birth; and the 1-year-old son of Gitjara who was the last child born to his second ex-widow. Tiwi men rarely had young wives until they were around forty; they even more rarely had any children of their own before that age. Padimo's dead baby and Gitjara's 1-year-old son were exceptional; the zeros in the last column against the names of Boya (42), L. F. B. (38), and Summit (36) represent the normal situation for Tiwi men of such ages.

In terms of success (as measured by bestowals) Padimo and Summit (largely through the patronage of elders) and Boya and Gitjara (largely through their own operations) were the coming young men among the Malauila. Of the others, L. F. B. was approaching forty with few assets and no influence, and the other three, Tiberun, Banana, and Teapot, had not even got started in the influence race.

A Very Successful Elder: Ki-in-kumi

The most influential man in Malau and the head of the biggest household was Ki-in-kumi. Since he had been born around 1863-64 and had been

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

159 557 a "young operator" somewhat before 1900, the deals by which he got his career launched were difficult to reconstruct. The results of them, plus the fact that he lived long enough to draw full dividends from them, gave him by 159 595 1928-29 a wife-list of twenty-one. These had been accumulated as follows:

When around 30 years old he remarried two elderly widows and a year or two later received his first bestowal. Thus by age 33 he had three wives. On that foundation he went ahead thus:

		Total
At age 33		
Had two widows and one bestowed wife		3
Between age 33 and age 43		
Remarried two more widows and had three more bestowed wives join him	+5	8
Between age 43 and age 53		
Three more bestowed wives came into residence	+3	11
(During these twenty years at least five bestowed wives died in infancy or childhood)	+5	16
Between age 53 and age 63		
Two more bestowed wives joined him and he married 2 more widows (one the mother of Boya)	+4	20
Now at age 66 there is still one more bestowed wife, aged about 9, in her father's household	+1	21

Thus his list of twenty-one wives was made up of six elderly widows and fifteen bestowed or rebestowed young wives.

By 1928-29 five of his bestowed wives had died before puberty and one was still with her father. Three of his six widows were dead. Subtracting these nine women, we find that his current household contained twelve resident and active wives: the oldest about sixty, two in their fifties, four in their forties or thirties, three in their twenties, and the two youngest around seventeen or eighteen years of age. Almost all of them had borne children since joining his household, but the death rate had been high among Ki-in-kumi's children and from all of his wives he had only eight living children of whom six were girls. Five of these six daughters he had bestowed or rebestowed on Padimo (see above) and the sixth on a middle-aged Rangwila. His oldest living daughter was the girl of 20 married to Padimo. His oldest living son was a boy of 18, despite the fact that Ki-in-kumi had been "a married man" for over thirty-five years. This was a situation which many Tiwi elders found themselves 159 in at the close of long and successful lives. With numerous wives, numerous ● 592 step-sons, large households to be managed, and large estates to be liquidated after their deaths, their oldest real sons (as distinct from step-sons) were still boys or youths and as such quite unsuitable as executive assistants while the old man lived or as heirs or executors after the old man died. Quite apart [882 888 from kinship considerations, the Tiwi emphasis on age and seniority made it impossible for Ki-in-kumi to utilize in any capacity his 18-year-old son. A youth of that age was a nonentity, whoever his father.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
O120 Tiwi O120

TABLE II
KI-IN-KUMI'S ESTABLISHMENT

159
592

(Ages in brackets)		Males	Females
Head (Ki-in-kumi	66)	1	0
Oldest step-son (Boya	42)	1	0
Sister's son (Padimo	36)	1	0
Old wives (of all three adult men)		0	5
Young wives (including Padimo's 2)		0	11
Young males (sons and step-sons)		8	0
Young females (daughters and step-daughters)		0	5
	Totals	11	21

Confronted by this situation, Ki-in-kumi in his advancing years had summoned Padimo, a sister's son in his early thirties, to come from Raugu and become his chief lieutenant. The youth of his own son had been a factor in his selection of Padimo. The presence in his camp of an older step-son, Boya, had been another factor. Boya, the step-son, was more than twenty years older than the son, and at least six years older than Padimo, the chosen instrument. Padimo, as we have seen, moved right in, fused his own small household with Ki-in-kumi's large one, and became Ki-in-kumi's Man Friday. Boya, the step-son, though married to a widow, refused to move out. Thus, among other things, we have to distinguish between Ki-in-kumi's household of twelve resident wives enumerated above, and Ki-in-kumi's establishment which contained Padimo, Boya, and the various people attached by marriage or kinship to them. Padimo had an old wife and two young wives (daughters of Ki-in-kumi). Boya had an old wife and a younger brother. There were a number of younger step-children of both sexes also resident with Ki-in-kumi. The full size and make-up of his establishment is given in Table II.

159
592
604

The Establishments of Malau

There were, besides Ki-in-kumi, six other elders of the Malauila band. Two of these, the brothers Enquirio and Merapanui, were well over sixty and deserve, both by age and by success, to be labeled senior elders. The remaining four ranged in age from about 45 to nearly 60 and since none of them were particularly successful we call them the junior elders. In Table III we have listed the seven "establishments" in which lived all the members of the band. We mean by an establishment a food-production and food-consumption unit. Ki-in-kumi's establishment contained three married men—himself, Boya, and Padimo—and therefore contained three households. Economically it was one establishment, since the sixteen wives it contained worked

162
592
621

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

as a team and the food they produced was consumed by the thirty-two total members of the establishment. For comparative purposes in Table III we list Ki-in-kumi's establishment as Unit I and give the personnel breakdown of the other six establishments that made up the total population of Malau. Unit II is the joint enterprise maintained by the other two senior elders, the brothers Enquirio and Merapanui. To this we have added the pathetic and ostracized Teapot and his motherless son, since when they ate at all they ate as hangers-on of the Enquirio-Merapanui menage. Unit III is the establishment jointly maintained by the brothers White Man and Ku-nai-u-ua. Since the oldest wife of Ku-nai-u-ua was Summit's mother, that young man, together with the elderly ex-widow who was so far his only resident wife, lived in this establishment. Units IV and V present no difficulty; they are the small households of the other two junior elders Pingirimini and Tipiperna-gerai respectively. Unit VI is the joint enterprise of Gitjara and L. F. B., containing largely old ladies and young men. Unit VII is the remarkable menage that had gathered round the elderly widow whom young Banana had illegally "married." To this couple

TABLE III

THE FOOD PRODUCTION UNITS OF MALAU

Unit	Married Males	Unmarried Males[a]	Old Wives[b]	Young Wives	Girls Under 14	Total Persons
I	3	8	5	11	5	32
II	3	9	1	7	11	31
III	3	2	2	3	5	15
IV	1	5	0	1	1	8
V	1	2	0	1	2	6
VI	2	5	3	0	1	11
VII	1?	4	1	0	0	6
Total	14	35	12	23	25	109

[a] Unmarried males include all males from male infants to men around 30, or more.
[b] The division between old wives and young wives is arbitrary. Several of the young wives were 40, others only 14 or 15.
? The question mark in Unit VII refers to the difficulty of deciding whether Banana should be classified as married.

had attached themselves Tiberun (Banana's unmarried older brother), two younger brothers, and another male orphan who had apparently moved in for want of some better place to eat. The Banana menage thus had somewhat the appearance of a case of economic polyandry and somewhat the look of a fraternity house with an elderly housemother in residence. We include it as Unit VII since by so doing we are able to include in Table III all the hundred and nine people who made up the Malauila band in 1928-29 and allocate all of them to the economic units in which they functioned as food producers and food consumers.

The data in Table III merit close study. These seven establishments illustrate in capsule form several of the more significant emphases in Tiwi career patterns; indeed each might be said to illustrate some time point in the life careers of adult men and/or some degree of success or lack of success in becoming an influential man.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

The Politics of Widow Remarriage

Ki-in-kumi's large establishment was the sort of set-up that every Tiwi sought to achieve but few accomplished. An establishment such as his meant wealth, power, prestige, and influence for its head, and, in Malau, Ki-in-kumi was the only man with such a household. With eleven males, many of them food producing; sixteen women, all of them food producing; and several of the girls under fourteen able to assist the older women, the amount of food this unit could collect in a day provided an ample food surplus for the establishment. A man whose household was a surplus food producer was a successful man. Moreover, since the large work force that produced the food surplus contained numerous young wives who (usually) could be relied upon also to produce numerous female babies, he was doubly blessed with both the requisites—surplus food and surplus daughters—necessary to increase his influence and make more people beholden to him or dependent on him. Of the thirty-five married women in Malau, sixteen, or over 45 percent, were in this one establishment.

By comparison, the other old men of Malau were less successful.[8] Through pooling their work forces, Enquirio and Merapanui had achieved an establishment (Unit II) almost as big as that of Ki-in-kumi, and probably its members ate almost as well as the members of his, but their effort was a shared effort and their influence and prestige had to be divided between them. They had been lucky with daughters but, divided between the two fathers, the eleven daughters in their establishment were less impressive than Ki-in-kumi's eight, and the total of seven young wives between them was quite overshadowed by Ki-in-kumi's nine. The two old brothers were successful men and headed a successful operation, but their prestige and success must be rated at least one whole degree below that of Ki-in-kumi.

Another pair of elderly brothers, White Man and Ku-nai-u-ua, had also joined forces (Unit III), but the results can be judged as only fair. They were at least the best off of their age group, the 45- to 55-year-olds, but the competition in that age group was weak, as can be seen by comparison of their establishment with Units IV and V, the households of Pingirimini and Tipiperna-gerai. Perhaps the best indication of the respective success in life of the seven oldest men is that given in the column of Table III headed "young wives." Of the twenty-three such women in the band, eighteen were in the establishments[9] of the three oldest men (Units I and II); the next five men in age shared the remaining five (Units III, IV, and V).

It might be thought that the small establishments of the unsuccessful junior elders like White Man, Ku-nai-u-ua, Pingirimini, and Tipiperna-gerai could be expected to increase sharply in size and these men to grow in relative prestige and influence when death removed the three old men at the heads

[8] It will be noticed that as we move into the older group of men we have to use their native names, since most of them had no "whiteman" names.

[9] Two of these eighteen were of course actually married to Padimo, but still part of the establishment of their father, Ki-in-kumi, since Padimo's wives all lived with Ki-in-kumi's wives.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

from their future sons-in-law and demands which look very much like bride price and bride service developed as a basis for marriage arrangement. A young girl had a relatively "free choice" of her future spouse. But following this selection, her father let it be known to the young man what he expected. The desired payment was often stated in Australian money by the 1950's; some men were asking as much as a hundred pounds for a daughter. (This was a very high sum, since Tiwi males working for the Army received four pounds a week as normal wages.) Other men were asking that their sons-in-law live with them, thus leaving their own parental home, and contribute regularly to the upkeep of the household of the father-in-law. This was, indeed, quite a practical arrangement, for when such a young man went to work in Darwin his wife had to be supervised at home and, further, his employer was supposed to send home to the Mission part of the young man's wages.

Thus, by 1954, the following type of marriage agreement was initiated by the great majority of Tiwi with marriageable daughters, specifically those who centered their activities at Bathurst Island Mission and Garden Point. A young girl chose her future husband from her single, male agemates, sometimes with a suggestion from her father. Her father informed his future son-in-law of the obligations incumbent upon him, which normally included matrilocal postmarital residence and a bride price. An older woman with children, or even one without any offspring, who became a widow, was discouraged from remarrying by her father, if he survived, and by her brother after her father's death. The father or eldest brother of a widow with a daughter reaped the benefits of allowing that daughter to marry the young man whom she desired. The widow herself did not remarry but stayed in the household of her father or brother.

Residence Patterns

By 1953, traditional Tiwi residence patterns had undergone major modifications, some of which have already been mentioned. The old residence areas of the bands had been depopulated; in fact, nearly all the Tiwi were located around one of four European establishments—those at Darwin, Bathurst Island Mission, Garden Point, or Snake Bay. In each of these areas a centralized village pattern had developed. Within the Tiwi communities at Snake Bay, Garden Point, and Bathurst Island Mission there remained a few of the old large households with a polygamous base. But in all these camps the household heads were well past sixty and in most cases past seventy. Polygamous households were dying out by 1953.

But what was replacing them? One might assume that the European pattern of the single family household based upon neolocal residence would have emerged as the new Tiwi system. This was not the case, however. Just as Hart found in 1928-29 that successful Tiwi men were the heads of large establishments, so in 1953-54 the younger male leaders had gathered around

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

177 them impressive collections of females. But these collections included now
● 592 only one wife.

Let us consider again the case of Cabbagee. It will be remembered that
159 his had been one of Father Gsell's first marriages and, except for a few un-
177 comfortable months, he had been monogamous all his life. There were camped
592 with him in 1954 a number of women and children who were related to him in many ways. There was his wife Polly, now a good Catholic who had taken the Christian name of Carmel, and her ancient mother Rita, who had borne a child long before the white man came to Bathurst Island. Also in "Cabbagee's camp," as the natives referred to it, was Patrick, Cabbagee's only son, and Patrick's wife. Patrick and his wife had three surviving children between the ages of four and thirteen; they also were raising 14-year-old Fabian, whose
[736 deceased father had been a "brother" of Patrick and whose deceased mother
968] had been a "sister" of Patrick's wife. Cabbagee and Carmel (alias Polly) had three daughters, and Cabbagee had arranged with each son-in-law that he reside with Cabbagee and support him in his fights and politics. These daughters and sons-in-law had a total of ten children. The other members of Cabbagee's camp included the widow and children of Carmel's deceased
[584 younger maternal half-brother. Cabbagee had given this "sister" to Car-
589] mel's half-brother for his wife and when he died seven years later leaving a number of young children, Cabbagee defended the right of his "sister" not to remarry. With this "sister" of Cabbagee lived her step-mother and occasionally her real mother, until the latter died. Further, living in Cabbagee's camp were
[607] two of his full sister's daughters and their husbands, who became members of the camp by reason of the fact that Cabbagee arranged his sister's marriage in such a way that her husband, Babui, accepted Cabbagee as his leader.[1]
[602] When Babui arranged his own daughters' marriages, his new sons-in-law became subservient to Babui and thereby subservient to Cabbagee. Also resident in Cabbagee's camp at times were his younger paternal half-brother Pawpaw with his two surviving wives, his full brother Tommy's son, and two of their widowed "sisters" and their children.

177 We have mentioned here only that segment of Cabbagee's camp led
162 by Cabbagee himself and that led by his half-brother Pawpaw, but such a list-
571 ing is adequate for our purposes. It is noteworthy that the downward alteration in the age of marriage for males has meant that many less women become widows; first marriages of women last longer and, therefore, the system of
[768 patronage established at the time of the first marriage is more permanent. Babui's marriage, for example, had made him a henchman of Cabbagee from about 1920 to 1955. When women did become widows, especially if they had
604 daughters, they were protected by their brothers who thereby became the
584 "boss" of their daughters. The father or the "boss" of a girl arranged her mar-
177

[1] Hart would use the word "patron" in this relationship. Pilling prefers the word "leader." This is itself an indication of a certain subtle change in Tiwi social structure. The patron-satellite relationship of 1928-29 is nowadays better expressed as leader-follower. The pairs of men are closer in age than they used to be. How the Tiwi themselves now express the relationship is indicated in the next footnote.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

riage with a boy who was willing to become the "worker" of the girl's controller.[8]

From the economic standpoint, the large household has much the same function as before the days of the Mission. The younger women go out together and gather food; the old women stay home with the young children. The younger men bring home choice items, which now are trade goods and money from Darwin. The "boss" of the great household is wealthy; today, he has food, tobacco, clothes, and usually sufficient money to gamble. The composition of the great households has altered, but their function is very much the same. The establishment of the monogamous Catholic Cabbagee is even larger than that of the polygamous old pagan, Ki-in-kumi, described in an earlier chapter; Cabbagee, with only one wife, has more women under his "control" than ever Ki-in-kumi had, despite his list of twenty-one wives. The Tiwi have thus been able to retain their large households even under the Mission-imposed system of monogamy.

The Change from Patriliny to Matriliny

In the pre-Cooper era of feuding, the largest significant units among the Tiwi were the bands; the Tiwi never, in that by-gone day, acted as a tribe, even in their attacks upon such outsiders as the British. In the 1950's, when informants talked of the old days they commonly mentioned that male members of old bands came together as units to go on war parties. These old bands did not have a strict rule of descent. But, as has already been indicated, the majority of the males were regarded all their lives as members of the band to which their father belonged. That is, the major unit of the old Tiwi social structure was patrilineal in emphasis.

There also existed in the old Tiwi pattern a strictly matrilineal clan organization, related primarily to totemism. One of the totemic animals of a clan stood for a member of that clan in the song composed to commemorate his death; for instance, the first line of the mourning song for a deceased male of the Red Paint Clan might be "I am red paint." Occasionally, several members of a clan helped one of their number in a fight, but this was apparently not very common before the Mission era. This clan-organization pattern prevailed among the Tiwi through about 1930. Then major and most unpredictable changes began.

What does one expect to happen when a society which has a patrilineal emphasis, like the old Tiwi one, comes into contact with a European society where, if there is any emphasis, it is a patrilineal one? Although one would ordinarily expect a strengthening of patriliny, such was not the case among the Tiwi. The old social unit which was predominantly patrilineal was a territorial group with its major functions in the system of feuding. When the

[8] By 1953, the terms "boss" and "worker" had come into the local Tiwi dialect to indicate superordinate and subordinate status interrelationships.